

Why do people become more boring as they grow up and grow older?

Age comes with wisdom, stability, and responsibility. Yet this process also constrains them as obligations reduce spontaneity and expected roles limit freedom; the electric disarray of curiosity and creativity is diminished. People become more bored as they age because their inner garden of creativity is pruned by the emotional hedgeclipper, the cognitive changes and social pressures. Adam Phillips observes that the less interesting our lives become, the more we strive to be the people we ought to be. (Phillips, 1993, pages 65-72).

Thus, I define the term 'boring' as a loss of emotional well-being, creativity, and thrill otherwise gained through surprise, but this state is often rooted in a misconnection. A person becomes boring not due to a lack of meaning but because their predictability drains curiosity. This may reflect a failure in the listener, the speaker or both. However, boring is not always negative because it can carry a connotation; for example, it could mean comfort or familiarity, particularly when contrasted with overwhelming novelty. As Aristotle argued, we become more virtuous through habit, repetition, and practice. That which may seem boring may be the main idea of character and inner peace. Therefore, 'boring' in my essay is defined not only with negative thoughts but with positive traits as well.

Growing older welcomes responsibilities, a job, bills, and anticipated social behaviour. Brene Brown argues that as people age, they prioritise belonging and social approval over authenticity, trading integrity for acceptance. (Brown, 2010, page 82.) Brene Brown suggests people find greater concern with belonging and viewing currency over integrity. To grow older is to feel time taking its toll on one's body; aches, fatigue, and mental fatigue occur like hardened mud. The garden does not die; it stops growing. As people grow older, they often begin to surrender choice, not because they must, but because it is easier to follow familiar paths than forge uncertain ones. This quiet erosion of agency, masked as maturity, often makes them predictable, less curious and increasingly unreadable to others.

In this essay, I will discuss three primary reasons why people become more bored when they grow up and older: the emotional cost of growing up, the mental effects when ageing, and an environment that limits our growth, which is a really good way to discuss the reasons why people become bored when they grow up or grow older.

One critical component as to why people become bored as they age is the emotional toll adulthood takes. Think of your inner self as a wild flourishing garden; it is filled with bright flowers, full of buzzing bees, and full of vines climbing toward the sun. But adulthood is like someone cutting back that garden over time, not for growth's sake, but for growth avoidance; anything that is too much, too messy, or out of place is removed. Adulthood teaches us that we need to play in the lines and exist in straightly lined, manicured rows. Erving Goffman states we learn to adjust our emotional import to what is socially prescribed because it is easier that way than being outcasts. But this awareness is defeatist. Instead of discovering who we are and expressing those emotions, we have learned how

to minimise ourselves to cut back to a smaller, safer space (Goffman, pages 15-22, 56-63). Hence, over time, our emotional gardens become smaller and duller.

Consider the last time there was a rush of uncontained joy, or consider the last time one felt a rush of uncontained joy? The last time I felt true excitement was in childhood when I was a traveller; I could not wait to get to all the new locations, and my body was like a bee cut for nectar. But this excitement wears off. We no longer bank on our emotions and instead add vulnerabilities like one thin pane of glass that can shatter at any moment.

Personality is determined by OCEAN (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism). Openness is what keeps that garden overgrown and wild. Openness breeds curiosity, daydreaming, and emotional depth. Yet as people get older, they become more conscientious and agreeable. These are all well and good personality attributes to maintain adult responsibility and social decorum, yet they come at a cost, the cost of shutting down to new experiences and emotional engagement. Not having enough openness is portrayed similarly to being in a low, grey ceiling atmosphere instead of an atmosphere with an expansive sky beyond, filled with opportunity. People fail to chase ideas and feelings that are new, which causes them to become bored, as they are not open to new thoughts. They become restrained, and their gardens become dull. This is the emotional cost of ageing, this gentle softening of self. Therefore, people become more bored as they grow up or grow older because of the emotional cost of growing up.

But people don't become boring only because of their faults. There are things beyond personal control, and over time, even life becomes boring. There is a reason youth feels like spring, a vibrancy, a bright, wild energy. But growing older feels like living in a constant autumn. The air is calm; the leaves fall. Activity lessens until it stops. Mental flexibility becomes set in stone. But it does not happen overnight; it happens gradually, like a vine no longer reaching for the sun but curling into itself.

Dr Daniel Levitin talks about how the older one gets, the more dopamine fades, suggesting that newness is less stimulating for older individuals, and the brain chemical for reward and excitement declines with age. Therefore, what was once excitement becomes downgraded (Levitin, pages 203-210, 275-279). That suggests that the urge to engage with the world and to take risks will all dissipate. Dr Robert Sapolsky connects stress and familiarity to the pathways of the brain hardening over time (Sapolsky, pages 431-438). And as this happens, new things do not become exciting; they are rebranded as inevitable tasks. Think about those vacations when you were little. You were very excited, but the excitement declined, not because you were no longer excited, but because the part of your brain that eased the flame had cooled. Thus, people become more boring as they grow up and get older.

This also affects our ways of meeting with others. Conversations become boring. Adults often tell the same stories, not necessarily out of genuine excitement, but because everything starts to sound the same. People hold tightly to what they can control without taking risks for discoveries. Dr Susan Pinker argues adults tend to avoid touchy subjects or emotionally demanding conversations simply to preserve their emotional bandwidth (Pinker, pages 98-104). As with the idea of maintaining a garden, the garden of conversation slowly dwindles over time. Opinions settle like cement.

Emotional avoidance grows just like physical distance, invisible, subtle, and shaped but time's passing.

The key psychological traits from the OCEAN model. The gates to their garden remain closed. Neuroticism also decreases, and while this can bring a sense of calm, it also results in a flatter emotional landscape. Fewer emotional highs and lows might seem peaceful, but fewer storms mean fewer rainbows. So, the emotional cost of growing older builds a fence around the garden. Yet this psychological cost of growing older builds a boundary to the garden. The mental anguish of getting older keeps what was rich, solid, dry and distressed. But it extends beyond that. Long before we feel lit ourselves, the world beyond, beyond the literal and socially constructed topography surrounding us, adds to the constraints of any potential expansion. McCrae's work highlights how these traits shift subtly. In the next section, I explain how these environmental constraints slowly choke the soil before it has an opportunity to blossom and why people get more bored as they grow up or get older.

Yet this has not always been the case. Just because society expects people to settle does not mean we should stop growing. Those who retain a childlike spirit, imagination, and emotional nuance want their gardens to continue growing. Life is not inherently boring; it is a choice, and for the most part, people do not know they are choosing it. David Attenborough is a great example. Despite being in his nineties, he journeys across the world with a sparkle in his eye for a flamingo's mating dance, a fish swirling between two coral formations or just the natural scenery and surroundings of Mother Nature, especially in his documentaries. These people are what it means to grow without abandoning their curiosity, and they did not just grow, they stayed as not boring, and they let their garden extend with vibrant blossoms. The 2021 Harvard Study of Adult Development found it indicates sustained cognitive and emotional engagement promotes life satisfaction. (Vaillant, pages 17-19, 142-147). Therefore, it is not ageing that causes people to be bored. It is the disconnection from friends or generally their thoughts.

However, not everyone can keep looking after their garden forever, as some age more than others. Many gardens are dull, not by choice, but by the world around them, such as Social Media. Society manages to persuade us to build fences that make gardens grow small, structured, and predictable. Susan Cain explains that we inhabit a culture that champions loudness and confidence over reflection and stillness (Cain, pages 46-49, 152-157). People who are quiet or inward are treated like wildflowers trapped in a concrete courtyard, beautiful, but boxed in. They learn to follow a routine, not because they are dull, but because the world rewards sameness and punishes unpredictability. In this way, we adapt not for growth, but for survival. Thus become more boring as they grow older.

Age also creates new limits. Dr Lisa Genova suggests that as we get older, our brains change in ways that do not always help us (Genova, pages 134-140). Memory fades, flexibility slows, and learning new things becomes as difficult as asking a centuries-old redwood to sprout new branches. Add this to the fences society already places around us, and our gardens feel increasingly boxed in. Boredom does not destroy the garden outright; it traps it behind walls too high to climb. Over time, personality itself shifts in response. This makes people more likely to follow a routine, stick with what they know, to keep their bushes trimmed and neat. Hence, making people become more boring as they grow older and grow up.

In Japanese philosophy, wabi-sabi embraces the imperfect and the aged. Maybe what we call boring is something else entirely, a garden that grows not quickly and wildly, but patiently and deeply. Still, I know these fences well. I have felt them press in around me as I have grown older. Sometimes my environment keeps my garden too small when it could be vibrant. The world often prefers narrow footpaths and even rows, but that does not mean we must always follow them. Thus, this makes people bored not just based on growing up or getting older, but also because of the environment.

Growing up and growing older does not mean we are boring. It is as complicated as an intersectional analysis between ageist psychological and societal expectations that act as proverbial fences. We are bored when our garden grows too big or shrinks too small, but with no in-between growth. We are not boring; we are a byproduct of an ultimately complicated life, and boredom is not an attack. Therefore, we need to release ourselves from the pressure of always being new, novel, and burgeoning, for even that can act as a fence. Yet at the same time, we need to embrace the simplicity of being boring, or routine, without it being an attack on what could be a very vibrant life. The artistry is in knowing how to play within the borders of the gardens, when to shove against the fences and when to remain inside one's well-planted, well-meaning garden. Therefore, people become more boring as they grow up and grow older.

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